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ABSTRACT

A project to enroll and serve "non-college-age" women at Barat College, Illinois, is described. The 18-month project was designed to develop new college-community ties, increase substantially the numbers of women returning to college, restructure internally to meet new identified educational needs, and provide cross-generational learning formats for all students. All students were to be integrated in a single institutional program addressed to life-span educational needs of women. The college founded an office of continuing education, enrolled 168 women during the first year, and disseminated information to the community through mailings, press stories, and personal visits. A discussion is presented on: basic facts about continuing education students at the college; faculty reaction and departmental impacts; attitudes among "traditional age" students; administrative coping with problems and issues raised by the influx of returning women; and the present status of the college with a "cross-generational" student population. A program evaluation was conducted and seven reports were produced. (SW)

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CONCLUDING EVALUATION REPORT

Barat College
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Prepared for

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Pursuant to Grant No. OEG-0-73-6454

Project Title:

RESTRUCTURING A COLLEGE TO MEET POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF "NON-COLLEGE-AGE WOMEN."

Prepared by:
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Director of Institutional Research
July 8, 1975

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INTRODUCTION

This report and the attachments to it summarize activities of a Fund-supported project to enroll and serve substantial numbers of "non-college-age" women at Barat. They describe changes made within a college to adjust to a new student population and to develop new patterns of cross-generational learning.

This immediate report is, in effect, a "cover document" for a half-dozen separate evaluation reports done by a variety of people within and without the college as part of the project. After a brief description of the project itself, each of the underlying evaluation reports will be described. On the basis of these reports, supplemented by observations of this author, this report discusses in turn basic facts about continuing education students at Barat; faculty reaction and departmental impacts; attitudes among "traditional age" students; administrative coping with problems and issues raised by the influx of returning women; and concludes with remarks on the present status of Barat as a college with a "cross-generational" student population.

Description of Project

At the time Barat applied to the Fund for project support (April 1973), the institution had just experienced a first great influx of community women returning to college. Barat then described itself as a liberal arts college for women, small in size, primarily residential, innovative in curricular matters, but overwhelmingly oriented to the education and life of an 18-22 year old student body. Just prior to the application, in January of 1973, nearly 80 women quite fortuitously had entered the college when it became more widely known that Barat was indeed open to such students. The college was suddenly in the business of continuing education without quite being sure what was involved and with educational arrangements tailored over the years to the needs of younger, full-time students.

In approaching the Fund, Barat requested support for a three-year project to develop new college-community ties; enroll substantially increased numbers of "non-

traditional" students; restructure internally to meet more fully their identified educational needs; and to permit emergence of cross-generational learning formats for all students. A key was that Barat sought not to leave behind its traditional emphases in educating younger women, or to raise up a separate new entity for the education of "non-traditional" students. All students were to be integrated in a single institutional program addressed to life-span educational needs of women. Younger and older would be together, each learning with and from the other.

Barat ultimately was funded for a year and a half at a reduced budget; a few of the matters described or proposed in the proposal, then, have either not come to pass or are yet "in process," and cannot be evaluated in terms of a final conclusion. The project had a go at most of the issues raised in the proposal, however, and quite a bit was learned in the project's 18-month course. The college did pursue fully its stated objectives for the first year of the grant. These were quite fully realized, as discussed in the project director's report: the college did found an office of continuing education; enrolled not 80 (the stated goal) but 168 into the program during its first year; through mailings, press stories, and personal visits, did mount a program of community information and contacts; did re-think educational offerings and procedures, leading to the number of changes discussed below; did, through its local program fund, start new, mid-project ventures designed to meet emergent needs; and did, as witnessed by this report, evaluate the program as it unfolded.

Evaluation Activity

Shortly after receipt of the grant, Dr. Theodore Marchese, director of institutional research and writer of this report, met with Mrs. Carol Stoel of the Fund and with an informally organized group of Barat faculty members, students, and administrators interested in evaluation. Basic decisions were made then to employ a variety of techniques and evaluators, to emphasize formative as much as summative evaluation, and to engender reports which would communicate to others

outside the institution as much of "the way it was" as possible.

In all, seven different reports were produced, attached as appendices, plus a "log" of critical incidents, reports, and statistics, not here reproduced but drawn upon extensively for the discussion to follow on administrative impacts. The seven reports, referenced by appendix letter, are as follows.

Appendix A: A Survey of the Similarities and Differences Between Continuing Education and Younger Students, by Dr. Paul Hettich, assistant professor of psychology at Barat. Dr. Hettich's report was the main "paper and pencil" research endeavor of the series, employing both the standardized College Student Questionnaire Part 2 and a locally constructed Institutional Activities Questionnaire on sample groups from the total student body. Hettich's data are a rich source for description of the new student population at the college and for wider opinion on the project.

Appendix B: Summaries of Four Tape-Recorded Conversations about Continuing Education at Barat, by Dr. Audrey Borth, professor of education at Lake Forest College. Dr. Borth, a former Barat faculty member and specialist in classroom research, came to be involved because of her knowledge of Barat but present separation from it. She arranged, led, taped, and analyzed a series of semi-structured group discussions centering on issues raised by the project, the first involving returning women, the next faculty, followed by younger resident students, concluding with a mixed group of older and younger students. The Borth summaries are an excellent source of first-hand spoken reaction; not so incidentally, the conversations themselves, by involving opinion leaders, raised the level of campus dialog about continuing education.

Appendix C: Summary of a Fifth Tape-Recorded Conversation about Continuing Education, by Caroyl Westphal '75, a student assistant in Barat's office of institutional research. The Borth conversations were spread through the 1973-74 academic year, the first of the grant; Ms. Westphal, as a learning experience for herself and contribution to the project, replicated Borth's procedure in the fall of 1974, near grant's end, providing a further source of information on many of the

same project-related issues at a later point in time.

Appendix D: Report on a Year-End Conference of Continuing Education Students at Barat, by Enid Powell '74, a continuing-education graduate of the college. At the conclusion of the first year of the grant, the project office and student affairs staff organized a day-long "debriefing" session at which "CE" women talked over problems and rewards of their return to college. Enid Powell covered that day with notebook and tape recorder, producing a journalistic account of women's life at Barat and a response of sorts to that tired old question of Freud's, "What does a woman want?"

Appendix E: Report on a Visit to Barat and Its Continuing Education Program, by Margaret A. Talburtt of Formative Evaluation Research Associates, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The project's second "outside" evaluator, Ms. Talburtt spent three days during November, 1974, poking around the campus talking with everyone in sight. Prior to leaving, she met with a large group of Barat people to share impressions, talk over a couple of paradoxical situations she had come upon, and explore possible next steps. A 16-page single-spaced transcript exists of that session; reproduced here is a four-page summary prepared the next week by Ms. Talburtt. Paragraph after paragraph, it hits the nail on the head.

Appendix F: Collected Faculty-Staff Comments, by Department and Office, on Impact of Continuing Education on Barat, gathered by Dr. Marchese. Near project's end, in December, 1974, each department and office in the college was asked to respond in writing to specific queries about program impact on their particular activity. Nearly all responded; replies are uneven in length and reflectiveness, but in toto are nonetheless valuable and a supplementary source to the Borth conversation and parts of the "log" as documentation of faculty-staff reaction.

Appendix G: Report of the Project Director, Sr. Marguerite Cleary. Prepared at project's end, Sr. Cleary's account details operation of the continuing education office established as part of the grant. It is especially good at relating many of the practical problems which arose in the course of the project

(what to do about babysitting, for example), and specifically addresses extent of project realization of the six "short-term goals" set for the project in the original proposal.

Though not resulting in a separate appendix, the writer wishes here to express gratitude to Mrs. Jean Smidt, counselor-advisor in the project office, for her work in logging key events and documents. The materials she provided at project's end have been invaluable in the preparation of this report.

So much for the project and its evaluation; what did we learn? The next section addresses that question in relation to those students the project was intended to help.

THE WOMAN RETURNING TO COLLEGE

Considerable research has been done over the last twenty years in this country on "the college student." Looking through it, a remarkable thing is that the "student" under investigation is almost universally an 18-22 year old. Older adults, of course, are far from a new phenomenon in postsecondary education; they have been, however, our invisible citizens.

Barat has a long tradition of research on students, albeit on younger residents, and sought through this project to extend its inquiries to its new population of returning women. The objective was to learn more about the students we were serving and to contribute, however, modestly, to wider knowledge of this "new" student population.

Chief sources of description used in this section are the Hettich report (Appendix A), of which these passages constitute a partial summary; the first recorded session of Borth (Appendix B) and the journalistic account of Powell (Appendix D); plus college records assembled by the offices of continuing education and institutional research.

Though perhaps obvious, it bears mentioning that the descriptions which follow are of a set of women from particular communities self-selecting themselves into a particular college. The communities these women come from are middle and upper-middle class (median family incomes of from $13,000 to $24,000), overwhelmingly white, family-oriented, religiously diverse, education-minded and mobile, and these, as generalizations, characterize many of the women at Barat. The college in turn, has local reputations for innovation, flexibility, and friendly accommodation; for programs in the arts, education, business, and psychology; for good teaching, demanding courses, and students of above-average ability; for comparative safety from crime and reasonableness of cost. Each of these factors will influence the character of the group choosing to attend, and might be borne in mind by the reader tempted to wider generalization. This said, let us develop in turn information about the background and educational status of returning women; their goals and behaviors as matriculants; and their characteristics as students.

BACKGROUND AND EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Class Standing at Entry

A typical pattern among returning women at Barat is to have begun college years ago, completed a year or two before leaving (often for marriage, maybe, indeed, to support a husband), to have since taken a course here and there, worked some, and started a family; what with transfer work, credit for prior experience, and CLEP, she enters well along toward the bachelor's. Among entrants last fall, 82% were candidates for a degree; 49% of these were juniors, another 18% seniors, 18% sophomores, and 16% freshpersons. Non-degree candidates at Barat tend to be people who already have a bachelor's but want an enrichment course or people needing a few extra credits for certification purposes.

Not so incidentally, the high proportion of entrants declaring degree candidacy reflects encouragement of the step by continuing education counselors. They claim it helps students dig in, make choices, set goals, and that it is related to the purposefulness, an absence of drift and dabble, among returning women at the college.

Full and Part Time

Among the 262 continuing education students in the college last fall, 40 were full-time, 222 part-time. A not unusual pattern is for a woman to enter and try a single course, do well, then carry two courses a term, and then maybe work in a full-time semester or year to accelerate toward graduation. Counselors encourage part-time women with the time and means to do so to step up to two or maybe three courses a term, so as not to overwhelm or "kill" the lone course if that's all they have to do and to promote a sense of progress toward the degree. Reflecting this, the registrar reports that part-time students nearing their degree carry an average load of 6.9 credit hours a term; others carry 4.9.

Age

The median age of full-time continuing education students is 33, that of part-timers 37. The age range of people enrolled through the program is 25 to 63. While

the modal group consists of women in their thirties, there are many in their forties and twenties. The latter group in particular is often difficult, in appearance and dress, to distinguish from resident students (several of whom are in their mid or late twenties), which produces occasional conversational gaffes but which also is helpful in suggesting the continuum of women at Barat and the danger of labels.

Town of residence.

Patterns of attendance resemble those found in many community-college surveys: draw concentric circles out from the campus, and the farther the distance the lower the attendance, with 25 miles about the outer limit for ability to commute. The 262 women enrolled this past fall came from 48 communities, ranging from 34 each from Lake Forest and Highland Park to 9 from Chicago to the south to one from Winthrop Harbor on the Wisconsin border.

Family status.

Nine of ten of the returning women are married. Three-quarters are parents. The average number of children is three, the children's ages averaging 13, though the range of children and ages varies greatly.

Employment.

Just half of Barat's continuing education population is holding down a job while attending college. A good many of these, especially the 70-80 nurses in degree-completion programs, are working full-time. For many of the women, though, classes at Barat are the principal endeavor beyond home.

Financial aids. Thirty-three of last fall's 40 full-time continuing education students (82%) were recipients of federal, state, or college financial aid. By contrast, about 60% of younger full-time students are on aid. But only 7 of the 222 part-time returning women were aid recipients, and all of these 7 were on Illinois state programs. For a variety of reasons--we hypothesize attitudes of older Americans toward federal "aid" and program strictures imposed by Washington--not a dime of federal student-assistance money reached this large group of people,

more than a few of whom no doubt had need.

RETURNING WOMEN AS MATRICULANTS

Reasons for Choosing Barat.

Not surprisingly, and consistent with the "home town" data presented earlier, "location" reasons predominate when these women describe why they chose Barat. Among younger residents, by contrast, location is the fourth or fifth reason most often given; they are attracted more by specifics of the college's academic program. Returning women do mention additional factors, as recorded by Hettich:"...program availability (e.g., school nurse endorsement program), acceptance of credits, availability of particular courses, the personal attention received, the warmth and atmosphere, and Barat's reputation." Put most generally, though, younger, more mobile students choose Barat as most desired among a number of institutional options; the community woman chooses Barat because it is close at hand and perceived as open to her.

Persistence.

Over the last four semesters, respectively 25%, 14%, 21%, and 26% of the CE students enrolled in a given semester and eligible to return for the next failed to return. Initially, this was quite upsetting. The college works hard at retention, graduates a respectable 55% of the younger students it admits as freshpersons, and, given the high satisfaction and achievement of the group, found it hard to accept that "so many" would drop out.

More recently, analysis of the reasons for this attrition shows the inaptness of the comparison with younger students. Practically none of the women leave for poor performance or dissatisfaction; many, too, as we've seen on their return, are not drop-outs but stop-outs. Most take leave for personal or family-related reasons: family illness, travel, moving, pregnancy, family finances, competing personal demands or projects....the very reasons, in other words, for the discontinuities in their education prior to Barat.

Satisfaction with Barat

As the Hettich data and spoken remarks recorded by Borth and Powell show, returning women express very high levels of satisfaction with the college. On the CSQ, respondents place in the 95th to 99th percentiles on measures of satisfaction with faculty, administration, major programs, and fellow students (traditional-aged students score high, too, but not that high). They give the college high marks for goals-realization, describe instructors as supportive, praise advisors,and are grateful for the CE program.

Goals

In choosing to return to college, Hettich's data show about half the CE's matriculating with a current or specific job as their motivation; these students most frequently are found in business and education programs or the bachelor's track for R.N.'s. But half, too, state reasons related to self-fulfillment, concepts of personal growth and enrichment; the two "groups" overlap, of course, though many of the latter motivations bring women to majors in art, English, psychology, and the like. Faculty members frequently remark that, quite independent of their motivations, CE students as a group are very achievement-oriented (witness their grades), and that many, in their quest for knowledge, are ideal students for liberal education.

Looking ahead, considerably fewer older than younger students see graduate or professional education in their futures (39% vs. 61% of younger students). Almost all Barat women, older and younger, see themselves in the labor market ten years hence.

Advising and Counseling

In the weeks around initial entry, academic advisors report spending an average of three hours each with returning women (vs. about half that time with an incoming 20-year-old transfer student). Transcript-credit matters are usually more complicated; CLEP arrangements may be necessary; goals clarification, program and

course selection, scheduling restrictions, appointments with departmental chairpersons are all likely to take more time. Family, child-care, work, and transportation ramifications arise. Insecurities typically surface and must be dealt with; needs for understanding and support are high.

Once in college for a semester or two, and usually following a successful initial course experience, returning women tend quickly to become self-reliant. Advisement time plummets, sessions tending to be friendly check-backs. By the same token, very few returning women turn to the college for personal counseling: about five did so this past year, despite the fine reputation of that service here. Once established, the women are surer (or more relaxed) about their goals, less troubled than younger students may be about why and what they are doing in college.

Use of College Services

As it is with counseling, so it is with other college services. Few visit the health center, for example, or look to the college for recreation, sports, or social life. Despite publicity, even personal letters, very small numbers of CE women have come forward to partake in growth groups, a study-skills short course, or religious observances planned with them in mind. One fairly successful venture was a Friday night wife-husband theater evening. Overall, however, CE women look to the college for what most part-time commuters would: good classes, and little else.

The reason for even mentioning these circumstances is that the college prides itself on a rich extracurriculum, knows the high educational value of certain out-of-class experiences, and, with integration of younger and older students as the goal, administrators and faculty tend to worry over the limits of CE students' engagement with the college. Lectures, concerts, panels, and films are especially mentioned in this regard. One observation is that any time you pick for an event, nine of ten CE students will happen not to be on campus. A proposed "solution" was to videotape events and make each available a dozen times a week; funds to implement the idea were requested of the project's Local Program Fund, but denied.

After graduation.

The project office last fall did a follow-up study of the 29 CE graduates of the previous spring, actually contacting 28. Indicative of the group's mobility, 5 of the 28 had moved, one abroad, and when reached were in various stages of resettling. Of the remaining 23, most had taken employment in social-welfare fields: 8 as teachers, 7 as nurses, 3 in the administration of social agencies, one as a counselor. Two were in graduate school, two were active in writing projects, just one had entered business (the first woman manager hired by a major heavy-equipment firm).

RETURNING WOMEN AS STUDENTS

Academic potential.

Vexing as it may be to the office of institutional research, the college has no standardized data on the academic potential of returning woemn at entrance. Measures such as the ACT and SAT have been deemed appropriate for students coming out of high school, inappropriate for non-traditional-aged students. Barat's admissions policy in relation to these women has essentially been one of explaining what's involved, then admitting anyone who wants to have a go at it. People are often referred to other sources of postsecondary education; sometimes they'll try a course here before applying for degree candidacy. Whatever this approach may lack in rigor, it works: only one entrant in the past two years has so much as flunked a course, and "D's" have been few and far between.

An observation is that these women would test no higher in ability than our traditional-aged population (which averages 80th percentile on national college-bound norms), that their fine performance in classes is more a function of the focused motivations and wider reading backgrounds they bring to college.

Academic performance

The college's computer isn't set up to run grades comparisons among groups of students, but substantial evidence exists that the CE student, while not the "curve-buster" of dormitory legend, does earn higher grades than her younger counterpart. We know, for example, that the mean grade-point average (GPA) of all freshpersons is 2.7 on a 4.0 scale, and that this climbs to 3.0 for all seniors (CE included). By contrast, registrar figures for the spring of 1974 show part-time students (almost all of whom are CE) graduating that term with a mean semester average of 3.12 (N=14), with all other part-timers averaging 3.07 (N=129). Hettich asked his respondents to self-report their GPA's; 42% of sampled younger freshpersons and sophomores reported a 2.9 or above, 81% of the juniors and seniors did, but 90% of the part-time and 100% of the full-time CE's reported GPA's above that mark. Similarly, a quarter of younger students self-report an "A" average (3.5 or above), vs. 31% of part-time and 44% of full-time returning women. These differences are less dramatic when one recalls that CE students are predominantly upperclasspersons, but a pattern of fine performance nevertheless prevails.

Cultural Sophistication

This scale of the CSQ measures "cultivated sensibilities in the general area of the humanities." Barat CE students score above the 97th percentile on national norms on this scale--as do younger Barat upperclasspersons. The high CE scores on this scale probably reflect a combination of social class and longer-term exposure to art, history, music, and literature; at the least, they represent a form of congruence with the dominant culture of the campus and a predisposition to liberal education.

Peer Independence

The CSQ also contains a peer independence scale, measuring "generalized autonomy in relation to peers." Not surprisingly, CE students knock the top off this scale (it was designed for "college students," meaning 18-22 year olds), scoring "above" the 99th percentile. Returning women are mature, inner-directed people.

Study habits

A third CSQ scale, this measures"serious, disciplined, planful orientation toward customary academic obligations." The 99th percentile on this scale is normed to a scale score of between 27 and 28; the mean CE scale score was about 30(!). These are people who are ready to get some work done!

Preferred learning styles.

A frequently given speech at education meetings suggests that with all the "non-traditional learners" coming into postsecondary education, "traditional" learning methods will have to give way to more "responsive" methods, such as.... (the speaker's pat method). Alas, the data seem not to be falling that way. Pamela Roelfs reported recently on reactions of older learners to different instructional styles (characterized as student-centered vs. instructor-centered), finding the latter preferred, and concluding that "older students prefer old-style classes" (Findings, Vol. II, No. 1, 1975).

The Hettich data at Barat tend in the same direction. He summated responses to CSQ items 140-44 (five items indicating preference for structured vs. unstructered learning), and found 42% of the CE students as against 29% of younger students supporting "structured" learning situations ($x^2 < .01$). Much could be said about this broad tendency (and has at Barat); the matter could be put the other way: 58% of the CE students leaned toward unstructured learning styles. The analysis does not control for subject-matter area, or strictly by age, or length of

experience at Barat, and there is the "anomalous" situation of "structured" students expressing high liking for instructors and classes in a college with more than the usual amount of "unstructured," learner-centered teaching styles. Nonetheless, the short of it is the absence of evidence that non-traditional-aged students need or demand "non-traditional" learning arrangements.

FACULTY, DEPARTMENTAL REACTION

Reviewing the second Borth conversation and the collected faculty-staff comments (appendices B and F), the quickest summary is that Barat faculty are enthusiastic about the presence of returning women in their classes. Something of a halo effect, even, seems to have developed around the large, diverse CE population now in the college: again and again one hears faculty praise this grouping of students as bright, motivated, interested and interesting, as setting high goals and achieving them, and as a force for raising intellectual standards in the college.

A more interesting question is <u>why</u> so many faculty members respond so favorably to the returning woman. The shortest answer is that she's "a good student." In addition to the qualities attributed above to her, by repute she studies hard, asks questions in class, hands in assignments on time, and is appreciative of help.

Faculty comments in the appendices and informal conversations suggest additional reasons. At a general level, faculty may in part be returning the respect, liking

and satisfaction reported earlier of these students for their teachers. Returning women and their instructors tend to be closer in age, communicate in similar ways, and be congruent in classroom expectations. The life experience, cultural sophistication, and longer reading background of the returning woman helps her; in academic situations she also tends to write a bit better than her younger counterpart (or than she herself did when she was 20). Many Barat faculty, female and male, admire the CE student for her return to college. Many good friendships develop between faculty and returning women. There is pride in her accomplishment, not only for her sake but the college's--she vindicates the institution's role as a college for women.

By way of perspective, it should be added that Barat is more "client-oriented" a college than most, that the open, helping welcome accorded these women is consistent with the way faculty and staff have sought to work with younger students, and that the latter are appreciated and admired too. The difference is one only of degree: faculty are delighted with the new program and the students it has brought, and tend not to be so critical of CE students as a perceived type. As has also been pointed out, faculty members (like administrators) see in continuing education a significant new source of enrollment growth, which is to say revenue and institutional stability.

Criticism of the continuing education student, while not widespread among faculty, is sometimes voiced. Now and then one hears of the older woman who "monopolizes" class discussion, or who brings in irrelevant personal experiences, or who may have this or that personal quirk. Interestingly, especially reading Appendix F, these problem people are always in someone else's department. Also, there was more of this talk a year ago than now--in part a reflection of the development of better faculty and peer control in dealing with unwanted classroom behavior. A year and a half ago, in the second Borth conversation, a suggestion was made and taken seriously for a quota on CE enrollment; this past spring a

similar suggestion, advanced as a trial balloon, was overwhelmingly voted down at a general faculty meeting.

The reaction of younger residents, as shall be reported in a moment, is not nearly so sanguine. Yet faculty are often unsympathetic to the voiced gripes of younger students. The attitude, expressed at faculty meetings, is that the older woman should not be told to be quieter in class; the younger student should speak up more. The "monopolizer" monopolizes because other students let her. If "curve-busters" make the resident student study harder, so much the better. There are rejoinders to these stances, but the attitude of the faculty in general is to stand firm. Not surprisingly, some younger students accuse individual teachers of failing to "control" their classes and of "favoring" older students.

Departmental Impacts

Program impact on departments is detailed in Appendix F, and no overall summary here can add much to it. For CE students, the most popular fields of study have been psychology, art, education, and the college's new business-economics program. Class sizes have tended to rise in these four departments, and advisement responsibilities positively to balloon; new staff has been added in each of the four departments, to the partial alleviation of overloads. Business-economics, incidentally, is the fastest-growing area of interest among returning women.

The reports in Appendix F confirm the informal observation that, almost without exception, departments have gone out of their way to make what accommodations seemed called for by the presence of the new entrants--in regulations, advisement, class scheduling, and the like.

REACTION OF YOUNGER STUDENTS

An interesting phenomenon, documented in several appendices, has been the mixed reaction of younger resident students to the influx of returning women. "Resentment" is probably the word which comes closest to describing the feelings expressed by some 18-22 year old students toward continuing education.

Before detailing some of these resentments, it is important to understand that they are far from universal. Hettich specifically asked his sample of students for reaction to continuing education; among younger students responding, 46% expressed generally positive attitudes, 42% negative ones. These percentages should not be read as one would a political poll as though there were a sharp split in opinion with an edge for CE; instead they represent a student-body situation of mixed experiences and viewpoints, within which there are sharp complaints amidst a measure of general acceptance. This section focuses on the complaints, for the same reason a newspaper reports wars and floods; it is understood, however, that complaints, wars, and floods are not the total reality of a community's daily experience.

What, then, are some factors which have given rise to complaints and resentment of CE among younger students?

For some students, there have been negative experiences with individual women bearing the "CE" label. In many instances, the returning woman breaks what the younger students regard as well understood rules of classroom behavior: one doesn't monopolize, put others down, run on with personal experiences, ask incessant questions, or fawn on instructors; assignments should not be "overstudied," a requested five-page paper should be 5-6 pages, not 20; and one shouldn't request special "favors" (such as a private exam at a different hour) because of some personal inconvenience. For a variety of reasons, many of them quite understandable, a number of women are perceived to commit "offenses" of this type, and resentments follow.

Younger students notice other changes in class, not attributable to any one returning woman but to the larger CE endeavor. For one thing, the size of the class, especially in departments such as psychology, may suddenly be 30-40 people instead of the expected 15-20. The time of the class, instead of 9:30 or 10:30 in the morning may now be 4:30 or 6:30 in the evening, interfering with other resident-student activites, or even with supper. In class, the easy, familiar ambiance of peers and friends is disturbed by the presence of earnest, hard-working enrollees "old enough to be my mother." Competition for grades, perceived as a zero-sum game, suddenly is made a lot tougher by the presence of highly motivated women "who, you know, have only one course to study for." Perceived faculty "favoritism"toward the returning woman, or the earlier-mentioned "failure to control" discussions, exacerbates matters.

At a more general level still, some students are vaguely disturbed by the way the whole program came about, its priority, and by its subtle effects. Unlike other significant changes which have occurred in this relatively democratic institution, the continuing education venture was not the result of any legislation or specific deliberation in which students took part; suddenly there were these women, then a grant and an office, then more women, rules changes, newspaper stories..."CE, CE, CE; that's all I hear about. How did this happen? What kind of a college are you turning this into? What about full-time younger students? Doesn't anybody care about us any more?"

Uncharitably, some staff refer to this as the "nose out of joint" reaction. But the sentiment is real; it raises good questions to which there aren't always good answers. It stems from genuine liking for Barat, and from a sense that many of the college's special qualities derive from a warm, positive community life which has meant a lot to individual students, especially residents, and toward which responsibility is felt. Now there appears a large group of avidly courted students who don't particularly relate to campus life, who come for class

and leave. " Integration" is the official answer (the ideology), but too little seems to occur. As one senior remarks in Hettich's report, the program seems to be "making Barat more of a community college at the expense of the traditional student body."

This "uneasiness about changing the way Barat has been" thesis is supported by an interesting statistic in Hettich's report: among students who "dislike" the program, 32% were seniors, 32% juniors, 27% sophomores and 9% freshpersons. Unease is greatest among those longest in the institution; those most recently in it accept what they find as the way it is.

Parenthetically, though the college hasn't quantitative data to prove it, a feeling exists that the worst of reaction against CE is past. Minor resentments of the behavior of individual returning women still are hard (these show in the Westphal report of last November), but criticism of the fact of the program has all but vanished. People are aware that the college has made a sincere effort to promote integration and eliminate apparent double-standards; returning women, as they have become better established in the college and familiar with its routines and expectations, exhibit fewer awkward behaviors; and younger students, again from a concern for the college's welfare and seeing enrollment boosts and some new staffing, now frequently say that "CE is good for the college"

An interesting phenomenon is that the great majority of returning women are unaware of many of these criticisms or feelings of resentment. To the contrary, most report positive encounters with younger classmates; on top of the positive "vibes" they get from teachers and advisors, and given their apartness from the daily campus world of dorms, cafeteria, and social gatherings, they can't imagine themselves as a "problem." Several of the women who took part in a town meeting in February and an All College Conference in April, at which negative sentiments were expressed, were quite shocked and distressed to hear themselves spoken of by

younger students as a source of trouble. Very good conversations occurred on these two occasions to help clear the air a bit and further "inter-group" dialog could obviously help more, but the difficulty of arranging occasions for dialog reamins (as does much of the "blissful ignorance" of the larger CE population): for reasons of personal schedule and or lack of interest in such involvements, not 10% of the total CE population of the college was at either event.

One substantive point raised at both the town meeting and All College Conference was the need to avoid stereotyping. There has been a tendency, natural perhaps, to lump together returning women as a group and to start generalizing. There is more awareness now among larger numbers of people of the dangers of type-casting and of the need to respect the individuality of every community member.

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In its original proposal to the Fund, Barat described itself as a college overwhelmingly oriented to the needs of an 18-22 year old student body, and proposed to undertake a variety of endeavors to make itself less"age-bound" and better able to respond to needs of a larger adult population. Beyond that, it vowed that "continuing education" would be pursued not as a separate entity but a service integrated into the total fabric of a "cross-generational" institution.

Having described the program, its students, and its impacts on existing populations in the college, this report concludes by discussing in turn the central questions of the project, what"age" barriers exist in a traditional college and how are they dealt with?, and what are the prospects for the emergence of a true cross= generational learning institution?

REMOVING AGE BARRIERS

Many of the matters in the section which follows are mundane as can be: parking, credit-hours, publications, and scheduling. But this is the stuff of barrier-removal, the myriad of details it was necessary to deal with over the past two years in the transformation of a college for tradional-age students to one for adult women of all ages.

This section was deliberately written to be as short as possible; the attempt is to mention as many "change" matters as possible, but not to dwell on details. Another institution contemplating change of the type Barat has undertaken will have its own unique set of problems; it might consider the following paragraphs a check-list, feeling free to write or call Barat should more information on a particular matter be helpful.

Changes are grouped under the following heads: physical arrangements, admission and matriculation, academic program and scheduling, services for students, staff awareness, and administrative reorganization.

Physical Arrangements

One of the matters the college inadequately focused on in moving into the program was the host of physical arrangements necessary for part-time commuter students, many of them coming for evening classes, which hadn't been concerns when the college served primarily a resident-day population.

Parking exemplifies these problems. In the absence of adequate public transportation, almost all of the returning women come to campus alone in a car; the number of parking permits has risen by more than 200 in the past year and a half. With only 235 available spaces--150 of them on a busy day will be taken up by faculty, staff, and resident cars--parking is a problem. And it's a problem for everyone, since, democratically, there are no reserved spaces; the administration has had to cope with all kinds of demands for reserved space. A new lot would eat

up lawn and cost$60,000; it is unbuilt. By rearranging spaces in one lot and moving to head-in parking in a second, the total number of spaces has risen to 275. Still, the problem essentially remains.

As an alternative, the college mounted elaborate facilitating mechanisms for car pooling. These took hold some during the gas shortage, but tended to fall apart afterwards (the difficulty in a college, unlike business, is that everyone comes and goes at different times). More recently, and successfully, the college petitioned the new Regional Transit Authority for bus service connecting the campus with nearby communities and rail stations; that service begins September 1, 1975.

The fact of larger numbers of people coming on campus for short periods, day and evening, has meant a number of changes. Office hours are extended; offices no longer close during the lunch period; the switchboard is now open evenings. Considerable new outside lighting was installed for safe access to a classroom building previously unused in evening. Library hours were extended to midnight, to accommodate greater evening use. The bookstore now has evening hours during periods of peak demand. The campus security force has the added responsibility of reaching evening students in class should an emergency arise (some returning R.N's are "on call" while in class). When everybody lived on campus, everybody knew where everything was; now, dozens of new signs, maps, and directories are up. Vending-machine service had to be re-thought and expanded. A couple of hundred new campus mailboxes have been installed (no easy matter, as the project director's report details).

A continuing problem has been the provision of lounge, study, and locker space for commuting students taking more than one course and spending between-class time on campus. A residential college hasn't much need for lockers, puts lounges in dorms, and knows that most studying will be done in student rooms; Barat, in short, had a problem. The problems have only been met piecemeal--a room converted to

lounge use, some old gym lockers dusted off, chairs placed here and there. A good move was to convince the food service to open the cafeteria for coffee between meals. Many students seem to use the library as a between-class stopping point, which is fine; the college is now exploring low-cost ways of expanding seating and carrel areas.

Admission and Matriculation

As the project director's report explains, initially the project office was forced into the role of an admissions office for returning women. Separate materials and application forms were developed, even a separate admissions committee. Part of the reason for this was that the existing admissions office was geared entirely to the recruitment of recent high school graduates. An effect of the separateness, not so incidentaly, was that the "main" admissions office pretty much went on doing what it had always done, using materials dating from 1973 (pre-project) which made no mention of the fact of continuing education; the consequence was occasional younger students entering the college, discovering CE, then asking, quite pointedly, why they hadn't been told of the program in advance. Another charge occasionally raised was that "double-standards" existed in the admission of people to the college; the explanation (when it had a chance to be made) of <u>different</u> standards was usually understood, but the fact of separateness kept the charge from dying.

In the course of the grant, a number of admissions-related changes were made, usually affecting both student populations. The college, like most of its type, had always required a "confirmation of acceptance" fee, set at $100 and applicable to second-semester fees. At first, the fee was not really requested of returning women. This seemed an inequity. But it seemed even more inequitable, given the sometimes tentative return plans of many women, to apply the fee to a second semester of attendance; at that, why apply it that way for any student? The result: all

students admitted to candidacy now pay the same fee, attributable to charges in the first term of attendance.

The college similarly charged a $15 application fee. Its historic intent was to cut down on "non-serious" applications, and to discourage indiscriminate multiple applications. But returning women do not apply frivilously or hither and yon; neither, for that matter, do most high school seniors. The money realized from the $15 fee is not significant. The result: as of March 1, 1975, no applicant to Barat pays to apply.

The college's faculty-student Academic Policy Committee spent virtually the entire 1974-75 year clarifying CLEP policy (Barat is a testing center) and developing guidelines for the award of credit for prior learning. Both matters are too complex to explicate fully here. Formal ratification of a new credit-for-prior-learning procedure was achieved at the final College Senate meeting of the year in May, 1975. Both issues, incidentally, raise ticklish problems of applicability to older and traditional-aged populations; a line of thought at Barat is that some differentiation must be made for use of CLEP (especially the general exams), but that credit for prior learning is a concept applicable to all. Barat's membership in CAEL, it might be added, has been most helpful in these matters. With more experience over the next year or two, further policy development should occur.

A final admissions-related development has been the identified need for more explicit, accurate, and up-to-date information on particular programs within the college. Many women returning to college come for a very specific program-related reason; they need better information than is found in a biennial catalog or in traditional recruiting materials. Younger students, too, increasingly demand such information. The upshot has been development of a set of departmental/program guides, often running 10-15 pages in length, discussing curricular options, faculty, milieu, and graduates in some detail. Six have been prepared to date, to good

effect.

In a further, related development, Barat applied this past winter to the Fund to become a demonstration institution in the "Better Information for Student Choice" national project. This June, it learned of its acceptance. As the application details, a strong impetus for applying came from our experience with the continuing education project. The preparation of an "educational prospectus" on the institution will become a focal point for the union of continuing education and traditional admissions efforts, to the benefit of all students and the institution.

Following considerable discussion, the college now computes cumulative grade-point averages only on the basis of current work accomplished at Barat. Grades earned earlier at other institutions (when the motivation, grading practices, or what not may have been different) are recorded but not averaged in. This is the "fresh-start" rule, significant for many women in establishing a current record which stands by itself. A thornier problem is that of academic honors. The dean's list is published on a semester basis and assumes full-time work; a part-time student never qualifies. On the other hand, a part-time returning woman can qualify for graduation on the basis of as few as 30 hours of work at the college, perhaps 8-10 courses. If she runs off a string of A's, as some do, she may qualify not just for cum laude and the like (which is fine), but for the top senior-class academic prize (which dismays those who feel it ought to go to a person who has been here longer and proved herself in full-time work). The Academic Policy Committee, having just re-defined two senior prizes, will wrestle further with these matters next fall.

Academic Program and Scheduling

Registration procedures are considerably changed as a result of continuing education. No longer will it do, for example, to have lines open from 9 to 4; evening hours are a must. The larger numbers of people to be registered require larger numbers of staff on hand. Long lines impose a particular hardship on the woman whose children are with a babysitter or who has run over to campus from work; there is pressure to simplify and shorten things. The series of "required" registration stops which assumed the registrant was a full-time resident has been pared back.

A thorny problem has been that of registration priority for classes with limited enrollment. In the past, seniors got first crack at academic registration, followed by juniors, sophomores, with freshpersons last (the latter get their chance at high-demand courses in a year or two). This is fair,but what about the part-time student, with junior or sophomore standing, who is on a specialized track (e.g. school nurse endorsement) and who needs just this course just this semester? About three different "solutions" have been tried in the last four semesters; the current practice is to allow any student with a special need for a particular course to make a reservation for it prior to formal registration, then let all registration go forward by class without regard to other status.

Orientation of incoming women seems to proceed on a new theory each semester. Initially, the women were brought in on a Sunday afternoon (before full-time students) for a separate session. One time, spouses and family were invited. Now, in the name of integration, returning women come in on a Monday for a day-long orientation with all other transfer students. This has seemed to work fairly well, though the educational situations of the part-time older woman and the 19-year-old full-time transfer are not identical, leading to some back-and-forth in presentations and a sense that neither group was served fully. With the advent of the commuter assistant (CA) program, small-group and one-to-one relationships evolve during the

day to the improved orientation of new CE students. Coffees, letters, and follow-up CA contacts continue orientation during the semester for the returning woman.

Academic advisement of the woman returning to college can be time-consuming, as indicated earlier, and creates new demands which an existing advisement system cannot handle. Prior to the project, the college maintained a specially trained group of advisors to work with freshpersons, plus a couple of additional people to advise sophomores and incoming transfers who had not declared a major; upon declaring, student advisement became the responsibility of the department or program. The returning woman most typically falls in none of the above categories, and has special situations, described earlier, which most advisors will not be familiar in dealing with.

The result has been formation of a new body of advisors, numbering six last fall, detailed to work with incoming women. There is some specialization among the six: one works with nurses, for example, another with women interested in business careers. They meet regularly among themselves and develop written information appropriate to their advisees. They stay with a student to the time she declares a major.

During the past year, three significant developments have occurred to refine the process. First, in an attempt to establish better controls and follow-up, the academic dean has appointed a part-time person to serve as coordinator of advisement. Her job is to keep track of all students, compile advisement records, and be sure each person has an advisor; she relieves departments and the CE office of paperwork and provides the college with statistical data on the "flow" of students through the institution. Second, CE, freshperson, and transfer advisors have begun to meet together more regularly; their charge is to think more systematically of the needs of all "undeclared" students. Third, with the new number of special advisement situations, the president and dean have carefully worked out more equitable

standards for measuring advisement as part of faculty load.

Parenthetically, the experience of continuing education has reinforced the college's commitment to its curricular approach, which replaces general-college requirements with a system of individual program planning with advisement. Advisors say they just don't know what they'd do if they had to start every returning woman to work on a canned set of lower-division courses (people come to us, in fact, because they tried a nearby college first and were told to begin with theology or gym!). The curricular sanction for beginning a woman in a course in which she's interested and will be challenged is invaluable.

The formal outlines of Barat's academic program have not changed much in the first two years of the program. Other changes needed to be made first, and there has been some sense of experiencing impacts first before tinkering with curriculum. The only specifically new degree program occasioned by continuing education is the completion sequences for R.N's, which, in fact, were initiated prior to the project. Within the next year or two, however, especially as the credit-for-prior learning matter develops, additional CE-related degree sequences are a possibility.

At a more mundane level, the outlines of the college's schedule of courses are changed some as a result of CE. The number of evening classes has doubled, to about 30 (though it is far from the case, as a campus myth had it, that returning women are primarily evening students). Coursework in psychology, art, education, and business-economics has expanded with new CE enrollment demand for those subjects. Coursework in study skills, achieving personal goals, and career planning has been developed, with CE needs partly in mind as a reason, though in fact the enrollment in each up to now has come primarily from traditional-age students.

A final major impact has been the establishment of a summer school. The explicit basis for starting was the expressed need of returning women for year-round work; many women find it possible to work in two or three courses during the summer, something impossible during the regular year, and this acceleration is important to them. The first summer, in 1973, ten courses were offered, most of interest to returning women, and the program broke even with 100 enrolees. Last summer, a couple more courses were added and 150 enrolled--75% of them CE--and a modest profit was turned. This summer, more courses still were added, and 319 turned up to register--50% CE--netting the college an unexpected $35,000. Summer programs are now expected to become a regular feature of the college.

Services for Students

As the project director's report indicates, a fair amount of time has been devoted to identifying non-classroom needs of returning women and to developing appropriate responses. Two major successful endeavors of the project have been the establishment of the children's center and of a commuter assistant program, both described in some detail by Sister Cleary. Her report and this have already described CE-related situations in financial aids, the mailroom, and with regard to lockers, lounges, parking and the library. The tendency of the CE population not to look to the college for a variety of services (counseling, health service, religious life, etc.) has also been described.

Following a number of false starts, the project office did succeed this past year in running a number of social events attracting returning women; these were sponsored partly for their own value, partly so that women might get to know other students like themselves and their own college better. The morning coffees described by Sister Cleary had that purpose; there have also been wine and cheese parties, invitational gallery openings, and after-theater receptions following student productions. Some occasions provide opportunity for college faculty and

staff to meet CE students informally, and to share news of upcoming campus intellectual or cultural events. Other events,such as theater parties, provide occasion for the returning woman to return to campus with her spouse.

Given the brief, odd hours of many women on campus, a troublesome matter has been that of their participation in campus governance. Many women are unable--or unwilling--to assume a committee post, for example, if for no other reason than time. But some do: for each of the past two years, a CE student has sat as a full member of the student governing board...but one still has the discomforting situation of two dozen younger students representing 500 peers, while one older woman "represents" 262. Despite attempts to the contrary, the situation remains, and probably will so in the future. There are good reasons, of course, but people on campus worry about it as an evidence of incomplete integration and as a gap in an otherwise democratic system.

One small anomaly highlights issues raised in the last two paragraphs. Whereas all full-time students pay $65 a year fees into a student activities fund--supporting lectures, concerts, plays, clubs, and service activities--the part-time student pays no such fee, only tuition by the credit hour. The attempt to integrate these women into community life, to extend to them benefits of the intellectual and social extracurriculum, in effect is an attempt to get them to use services and events which another student population, but not they, are paying for. To complete the circle, the activities fund is controlled by the student governing board, on which CE representation is merely token. This is not necessarily to suggest an inequity: many returning women are paying in full for what they came for: courses, and no more. The present status of the situation is that it will remain as is through the coming year (1975-76), but be studied by students and the administration.

Staff Awareness

The changed character of the student body tends to create new situations for

faculty, administrators, and staff to deal with. By and large this has not been seen as a "problem" area by people associated with the project. The liking for CE students attributed earlier to faculty exists as well within the administration; given good will and ordinary sensitivity, and sometimes the prodding of project staff, most situations have been responded to fairly and expeditiously. Appendices F and G and the comments of students themselves in B and D attest to this.

A number of things have been done to facilitate faculty growth in self-awareness in relation to classroom and advisement needs of returning women. The topic was a principal one at a two-day, off-campus faculty retreat held just prior to the start of the 1974-75 academic year. Information and exchange initiated at that conference was extended through the year in faculty meetings and in smaller sessions. Most of the discussions might be described as "awareness" in type; a helpful next step, should more resources become available, would be a fuller program of faculty development in which a more analytical approach to the "management" of mixed classes could be introduced. All of us--as teachers, advisors, and administrators--could use more background in needs assessment and response identification.

Within the administration, a helpful step initiated by Sister Burke, the president, was to invite the project director to membership on the administrative staff. In the past two years, just about every conceivable institutional question has come before that group's weekly meetings, with input from CE available in every case. Project problems, too, have been made topics for the staff. A result is that major administrators at Barat have a pretty thorough understanding of what is involved in CE and its meaning for the college.

Administrative Reorganization

In November, 1974, the college asked Ms. Margaret Talburtt of Formative Evaluation Research Associates to visit the college for three days and report back

on the status of continuing education and its "integration" within the college. Talburtt's report is attached as Appendix E; as noted earlier, it struck responsive chords.

As a result, the president set aside two days at semester's end (December 19-20) during which the entire staff, including people from the project office, admissions and student affairs, and with the aid of Ms. Talburtt back as a facilitator, reviewed the project against its stated objectives. Many evaluative conclusions were reached, often as reflected in this report. The main topic, however, was the integration of the project into the college, and what new program and staffing possibilities might arise therefrom. A particular concern was the appearance (and partial fact) of separateness raised by the existence of a separate CE office. And whether "double standards" existed or not, duplication of effort did, especially between CE and admissions. Meanwhile, offices which were supposed to be concerned with the entire college--student affairs, for example--because of functions picked up by the project office, had pretty much been left on a prior course of serving younger, full-time students.

The result was a decision, taken by the president, to merge offices and create an "office of admissions and continuing education" headed by a new senior person designated as a "dean" and reporting to the president. Merger of the two staffs--at this writing an accomplished fact--has brought some savings; just one person, for example, handles all record-keeping and the phones. Beyond this, the idea is that all persons on the combined staffs will work as a team, and individually develop skills to work with different students. One application form, one set of materials, one admissions committee, one overall marketing plan is the goal. This past April, concluding an extensive search, in which all parties participated, the president appointed Roger Faust to the new deanship. He was chosen because of his background in traditional admissions, his work in New York state for the Regents and for the Commission on Nontraditional Study, and for his background in the study of higher

education (the Syracuse U. Center) related to new degree programs. He also stood out among candidates for his creative response to the "Better Information for Student Choice" project, which, with the new Fund grant, will key the approach of the new office.

In addition to combining the two offices, the new dean will work in close consort with two others, financial aids and the registrar, to effect improved coordination of services for all students. Other offices will assume duties previously handled out of the project office. The children's center, for example, will be run through the education program, CA's through student affairs, and so forth.

The longer-term effect of these changes is yet to be seen. Interestingly, a reason there was a separate office in the first place is because Fund projects (even the Fund budget form) seem to assume that projects will have a project office. (Maybe this was just our assumption.) In any case, the project office and Sister Cleary performed valuable service as a separate entity: undivided attention was given to a function, lines of responsibility were clear, a focal point of advocacy existed for returning women. Sister Cleary, in the months since the decision has been made, has raised second thoughts about whether CE students will be as well served by the new arrangements; an informal function of the project office, for example, was that it was a drop-in center and communications point for enrolled women, and needs thus served may not be as well met by the seemingly more diffuse present arrangement.

Notwithstanding these questions, the new office is in being, Dean Faust at the helm. The college is committed to one program for a combined student body, has few illusions about having "solved" every problem, and looks forward to the coming year with high expectation.

BARAT AS A "CROSS-GENERATIONAL" COLLEGE

Barat has experienced in the last three or four years an old lesson from organizational theory: the introduction of large numbers of "new" people into an organization is qualitatively different from the presence of a few such people. New dynamics, new rules, new threats come to the fore when an established community is asked to absorb a new population. There is irony and reality in the observation of "old-hand" (i.e., pre-1973) CE students in the appendices; they rue the "good old days" when their numbers were few, CE was not an issue, and there was no feeling of "separateness" on their part. Of course, not many community women were then getting today's opportunities to return to college, nor is it clear that the educational needs of the early few were in fact being best met. Be that as it may, it is the hope in preparing this report that other colleges contemplating moving as Barat has will take note of the complexities these steps raise, of the qualitative nature of the change; more is involved than running ads and registering those who respond.

Given the Fund-supported project and the presence now of nearly 300 returning women on campus, how much "intergration" can be said to have occurred? At the administrative-organizational level, integration can reasonably said to be far advanced: matters of arrangement, rules, service, and equity have been dealt with extensively, if not exhaustively, and the new office, headed by Dean Faust, speaks to the college's long-term commitment to continue serving community women. Faculty-staff attitudes are firmly supportive of the presence and integration of these women into the Barat community. A reasonable hunch is that attitudes of younger full-time students will continue to move in the direction of acceptance, especially as their legitimate concerns are dealt with. Parenthetically, the abolition this summer of the separate CE office, committees, materials, and the like is a popular step which will undercut much of the criticism reported earlier.

To further attitudinal integration, a recognized need now is to share more widely basic information about the returning woman at Barat, as a counter to the "myth-making" and "scape-goating" spoken of in the Talburtt report. One handicap the college labored under during the past year was the absence of a student newspaper, of a basic, trusted medium for communicating basic information. The problem of communication was addressed extensively at April's All College Conference, and of the paper in follow-up meetings of the student governing board. New plans are afoot for the coming year which should be helpful in promoting inter-group awareness on campus.

The student affairs staff increasingly has come to the conclusion that inter-group difficulties, be they by age, race, or some other status, tend to persist in part because community members often lack the basic communication and problem-solving skills for dealing with them. A likely next development at Barat will be a major, all-college emphasis on the development of such skills. Not so incidently, their absence in individuals often turns out to be at the heart of unresolved inter-personal situations in the classroom. All students need to assume more responsibility for their own situations in class (not remain silent, later to scape-goat a teacher or "CE students"), and they need skills of assertiveness and communication to do so.

Beyond administrative and attitudinal integration, how much more might one expect? A response now might be, "not as much as many of us thought before." The ideal of a "cross-generational student body" proves a bit romantic. The picture seemed to be one of all students doing the same things in an emergent, twice-enriched culture. Just a bit of the resentment of CE students in fact, seems to stem from the fact that this picture largely hasn't been realized. For the fact will be that the 34-year-old mother of three, carrying a load of two tough courses plus community work and maybe a part-time job, just isn't going also to be a mainstay of the international relations club. Nor will she look to the college for

social life, entertainment, volunteer outlets, religious life or even intellectual-cultural enrichment. What she wants most basically from the college is that those two courses be good, and, eventually, a degree.

As with most examples, this one exaggerates and over-generalizes. The college will continue to re-think its services to returning women in attempts to make them more attractive, responsive, and enriching. But a sense exists now that the classroom will continue to be the prime locale for what "cross-generational learning" occurs at Barat. How much occurs there presently? We haven't "measured" it, but probably more than we sense. Barat has a fine faculty of experienced, aware teachers; one has the sense from conversations that many have found ways of drawing upon the mixed backgrounds of their students to the advantage of all. Many students, too, have reported improved classroom situations over the past year or two. Could more be done to maximize the potential for learning in multi-age groups? Of course, and suggestions for doing so are part of the college's faculty-development plans. But a good sense of positive benefit already realized exists, too.

One factor with potential for pulling together a lot of loose strands is the spade-work of the past year on the matter of credit for prior learning. As soon as one gets into the area, one gets in the business of individual assessment, and processes of discovery and analysis of a student's background, skills, abilities, weaknesses, and interests soon follow. It is a short step from assessment to goal setting and planning activities, related to college, career, and life. These processes hold great potential for informing a whole new capability in advisement for all students. Soon, too, they force a college to examine more critically its programs in terms of their aptness as resources toward the achievement of identified goals. Probably they would tell us, for example, of a need to provide skill development for students in communication and problem-solving--key skills mentioned earlier, parenthetically the subject of a recent outstanding pair of publications produced by a CAEL assessment team. What you get, in short, from an initial CE-related issue, is the insight to look ahead to a new cycle of assessment-advisement-resource development very much related to the needs of all students.

A further need felt at Barat, not unrelated to the above, is for theoretical models of adult development. Whereas, through the work of Sanford, Katz, Chickering, Perry, and others, one can gain a reasonable sense of developmental issues and potential responses for an 18-22 year old student population, there are far fewer resources for thinking conceptually about learning and growth among older adults. Some relevant material has been found (notably, a recent unpublished paper by Chickering), but more could be used.

One final, more practical matter. In its original proposal, Barat suggested an ultimate enrollment of 400-500 community women. In fact, the CE population, reaching 262 last fall, is not likely to go above 300 this. The reason is increased competition from area colleges and universities--none of whom, in our opinion, has addressed half the issues we have in getting into this area, but all of whom (is this paranoia?) seem to have twice or more the advertising budget to attract women to their doors. Further, we are aware that several schools have moved into the area upon notice of our numerical successes. In a sense, this is a healthy development: it is a "ripple effect" from a Fund-supported project, it means greater choice and net opportunity for community women, these schools eventually will come to the issues we have, and competition helps keep Barat on its toes. Meanwhile, though, our competitive situation simply isn't what it was before. Our response will be the previously described "Better Information for Student Choice" project: to detail, via a prospectus, just why and for whom Barat might be a best-choice postsecondary opportunity. We hope to demonstrate that Barat is an institution devoted to the education of women of all ages.

T. J. Marchese
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